God's Plan
GOD'S PROMISES
& GOD'S PEOPLE
SMALL GROUP STUDY

Session 3: The Promise of God's Love & Discipline

Sometimes we want the benefits that come with being godly without actually having to be godly—and then we find there are consequences to our ungodly choices. We must remember that holiness, not happiness, is God's objective for us. God disciplines us because He loves us, and understanding the consequences of ungodliness is necessary for our spiritual development. Deciding to choose the Lord's will instead of our own helps us grow a deeper relationship with Him. We have many tempting options for how to live in our current culture, but God's way always produces a harvest of blessings.

Scriptures

2 Peter 1:3–9 (NIV®)
His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

Romans 7:21–23 (NIV®)
So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

Discussion Questions

1. In your day-to-day life, do you find yourself valuing happiness or holiness more? Which does God value more for you? What are some practical ways you can remind yourself of God's will for your life when you face temptation?

2. The verse from 2 Peter above lays out a set of characteristics we develop when we mature in our faith. Share a season or time when you saw these characteristics grow in your life, or discuss where on the timeline you are now with your faith.

3. We generally choose from multiple options, and by saying "Yes" to God's way, we often say "No" to something else. Have you ever had a difficult time choosing God's way over a different way or your own desires? What did that experience teach you about what it means to follow God?

4. The decision to choose obedience to God is one that each generation has to make for itself. How have the choices of the generations before you affected your faith and faith choices? How will your choices affect those to come?

5. God has given us everything we need to fulfill His promises. Do you agree with this? What are some of the things God has given us that can never be taken away?

6. Why do we sometimes want the benefits of godliness without wanting to follow God's ways? What can help you change that mindset?

Going Deeper

1. God has given us free will, and in 2 Peter 1:3, we're told that He's fully completed and provided everything necessary for us to live godly lives. Yet the Bible is full of the stories of people who used their free will to make ungodly choices. Have any of these stories ever had a specific influence on you as you made a decision about exercising your free will?

2. In 2 Peter 1:3-9, Peter lists characteristics we need to be effective and productive in our knowledge of Christ. What does it mean to you to be effective and productive in knowing Jesus?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You that Your divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life. Thank You for Your great and precious promises and the help they provide for us to escape evil desires and this world's corruption. Thank You that Your promises come with incentives to help us be obedient and choose Your way. In Your great power, help us to overcome our human natures and choose to follow You with greater determination than ever before. In Jesus' name, amen.

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